


Dying in Faith, *Open'd and Improv'd*

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S E R M O N

Occasion'd by the

D E A T H

Of the Late

Mrs. MARY COOPE,

W H O

Deceas'd *July 2.* Aged Forty-Six.

Preach'd at

PECKHAM in **SURREY,**

July the 8th, 1733.

With Some **E N L A R G E M E N T S.**

By **THOMAS HADFIELD, M.D.**

L O N D O N:

Printed for **RICHARD HETT**, at the *Bible and Crown* in
the *Poultry*, near *Cheapside.* **M.DCC.XXXIII.**

[Price Six-Pence.]

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SERMON

Occasion'd by the

DEATH

Of the Late

Mrs. MARY COOPER

WHO

Deceas'd July 24th 1733



PECKHAM in SURREY,

July the 8th 1733.

With Some ENLARGEMENTS.

By THOMAS HADFIELD, M.D.

LONDON.

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[Price 6s. 6d.]

HEB. XI. 13. former Part.

These all died in Faith. —

THE inspired Penman of this Epistle, who was most probably *St. Paul*, having by many cogent Arguments in the former part of this Work demonstrated the Preeminence of the Christian Religion, above and beyond any former Dispensation, particularly the *Jewish*; comes in the Close to recommend and establish the Brethren in the Faith and Practice thereof. In those Times of publick Persecution from *Jewish* and *Pagan* Adversaries, the Profession of Christianity might cost them dear; but the Faith he so earnestly exhorts them to, would, as he shews, bear up their Spirits under the greatest Sufferings, and fortify them unto Victory. This he argues from the Nature of Faith, alledging from the Prophet *Habakkuk*, That 'tis *That* by which ck. ii. 4. the Just in all Ages live. *The Just shall*
B live

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live by Faith. They shall overcome Temptations, work Righteousness, obtain Promises, hold on in Duty and in comfortable Hope unto Salvation, by means of Faith in their God, who can no more deceive than he can be deceived. Our Apostle having hinted these Things, proceeds, in the first Verse of this Chapter, to describe *What* he means by the fore-mentioned Faith. Faith, says he, is the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen. This Account of Faith he illustrates and confirms by several famous Instances under the Old Testament-Dispensation; such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose whole Life was a Life of Faith, of eminent Piety, Self-denial, and Obedience to God from a Principle of Faith. All these forementioned Patriarchs died, says he, *Ver. 13.* (for there is no Discharge in that War; nor indeed of all Men would the Godly desire to live here always, in this State of Affliction and Absence from the Lord.) These all died: All, except Enoch, who, for special Reasons, was translated that he should not see Death. And they died as they lived. They lived in Faith, all their Days confiding in the Word and Promises of the immutable infallible God; and they all died in Faith, in the very same Faith.

Eccl. viii.
8.

Job vii. 16.

2 Cor. v. 6

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The Words are an Encomium on the peculiar Death of the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, informing us how they died. Not as a Fool dies, by publick Justice, in their Folly and for their Crimes; nor in a sottish carnal Presumption of Mercy and Salvation, while they neglected the Means proper to secure them; nor in the Blacknets of Despair, as Judas. Oh! No; But in the Obedience of Faith, in a full Belief of God's Word, and steadfast Expectation, of the Accomplishment of all his Promises to themselves and theirs, in the proper Season thereof. *These all died in Faith.*

'Tis the real Glory, Excellence, and Privilege of all the Saints, who have liv'd by Faith, to die also in Faith.

This is the general Instruction from the Words in their Connexion with the Context; the Observation suggested to us therein. And in speaking to it, I propose these two things.

First, To illustrate the Character and Encomium the Holy-Ghost here gives us of these eminent departed Saints.

And then,

In the second Place, Suitably to the Tenor of such Examples, and the mournful Providence at this time commemorated by us, to improve it to our use.

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Three things I would speak to for illustration of the Character and Assertion in my Text. *These all died in Faith.* And shew,

I. Who were *all these* that died in Faith.

II. What was *that Faith* wherein they died. And,

III. What is meant by their *dying in Faith.*

I. *First* of all, Let us inquire, *Who* were *all these* who died in Faith? In the General, all the Ancients before Christ. The Words, I grant, are primarily intended of the three great Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* Both the Context itself, and the History of their Death, circumstantially related in the Old Testament, plainly shew that this is a *true Encomium* here given of them, that these *Three* all died in Faith. But I am by no Means satisfied to restrain this Testimony and Commendation to them alone, any more than to extend it to all their Offspring after them, many of whom, as the Apostle has observed, *died in Unbelief.*

Hebr. iii.
18, 19.

Those three Patriarchs were Men of the most distinguished Faith, living and dying; but they were not *All* that died in Faith; not the *All* here referred to. 'Tis certain they were not *All* who received and embraced the Promises from God; nor *All* who thereupon confessed themselves Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth, and sought another
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and a better Country, even an heavenly: For this likewise did *Abel*, *Enoch*, and *Noah* before them; as also, *Joseph*, *Moses*, *David*, *Samuel*, and many others after them.

By *All* those then who *died in Faith*, must we understand *All* the famous Heroes and Saints of the Old Testament Church: *All*, whose Example is here propounded to our Notice and Imitation: Not only *All* that the Apostle himself here *expressly* mentions, but *All* those likewise whom he *tacitly* refers to in that *Hyperbole*, Ver. 32. saying, *The Time would fail me, should I attempt particularly to recount them*: *All* those, of whom in general Terms, at the close of the Chapter, he asserts, *These all died, having obtained a good Testimony, or Report thro' Faith*.

But against this Interpretation of the Words, it may perhaps be alledged, Did *Rahab* the Harlot die in Faith? Did *Jephthah*, who in Consequence of a precipitate Vow, offered his Virgin Daughter a Burnt-Sacrifice to God, die in Faith? And did wrathful vindictive *Samson* likewise die in Faith? Whereby does it appear that *these All* died in Faith? Without entering at large into all the Particulars of those three Instances, which my present Undertaking forbids, we may go near to satisfy the Inquiry, were we to say no more than this, viz. That their Names, with this Encomium

mium annexed to them, are here inserted by the Holy Ghost. They are mentioned in conjunction with *Moses, David, Samuel,* and the Prophets, who unquestionably died in Faith; and upon summing up the whole List, they are commended together with them: For 'tis said, that they *All* obtained a good Report through Faith, and have received the Reward of Faith, though not in its ultimate fulness, *That* being reserved to Christ's glorious coming, at the last Day. Now, was the Searcher of Hearts mistaken in them? Or can it be thought he has misrepresented them in his Word to us? Does infinite essential Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, need Falshood in the Government of the World? Can such Evil dwell with him? Far be it from us to surmise it!

However, that I may not seem to evade a Difficulty which deserves a sober and considerate Answer, I would reply to it distinctly in each of the three Instances now mentioned: And,

Josh. ii.

1. *First*, 'Tis demanded, Did *Rahab* the Harlot die in Faith?

Rahab, I acknowledge, is called a *Harlot*; but *Zonab*, the *Hebrew* Word in the Old Testament, might as truly and properly have been rendered an *Inn-Keeper* or *Hofstess*, as the learned know. Had she been

Matt. i. 5. a common Prostitute, would *Salmon*, a Prince

Prince of the Tribe of *Judah*, and one of Luke iii.
our Lord's Progenitors, have married her? ^{32.}

Could he have done it by the Law? Or would the Spies of *Joshua*, charged with so secret and important a Commission, have gone to lodge in her House? Are these Things probable? Let sober Reason speak.

But taking the Word as we render it, to signify a *Harlot*, for so indeed the Holy Ghost, in the *Greek*, expressly calls her; Jam. ii. 25. Inn-Keepers, in those Days, making their παρὰ βῆμα Bodies as publick as their Houses, from a πρόβν. Conceit, that Fornication was at the most but an inconsiderable Sin. She might have been a Harlot, but 'tis reasonable to believe she was no Harlot now. God had undoubtedly given her Repentance from such dead Works; as, by *St. Paul's* Ministry, he afterwards did to the *Corinthians*, who, in their Gentile-State, had been such, and I Cor. vi. worse. Plain it is, that her Faith in God ^{9, 10, 11.} was real, because it was eminent: For, by *Faith* she received the Spies in Peace; and to secure them, sent them out another way than that they had intended to have gone. Jam. ii. 15.

By these Actions she hazarded her own Life and Safety, exposed herself to the Fury of the King of *Jericho* and her Countrymen: And from what Principle? Why, from a Principle of *Faith*; from a Belief that *That God* who had already wrought such great Works for *Israel*, was the only
true

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true God, and their God; that he would give them the Land of *Canaan*, though now possessed and defended by Enemies, and would protect and provide for them, and for all those, who, renouncing all other Happiness and Hopes, should chuse him, and put their whole Trust in him. With this People therefore, on these Foundations, she resolves at all Hazards, henceforth to take her Lot. Such was her Faith at that Time! Truly great and wonderful! and such, as doubtless never failed. But,

Judges xi. 2. Did *Jephthab* die in Faith? *Jephthab*, who in Consequence of a rash Vow, offered up his Virgin-Daughter and only Child a Burnt-Sacrifice to God?

To clear up this Case, I first admit the Fact, that he did actually offer her up, &c. And indeed the Terms in which the Scriptures represent this Matter, seem so clear, so strong, and positive, that I have wondered any should dispute it. The same, I find, was the current Opinion of the *Jews*, viz. of *Josephus* and *Philo*, and of the principal Fathers of the *Greek* and *Latin* Church, as, *St. Chrysostom*, *Theodoret*, *Justin Martyr*, *Ambrose*, *Austin*, *Jerom*, &c. And yet some modern Commentators, to support the Negative of the Question, have tortured the Text into a quite contrary Signification; and in the Result, will allow it to mean no more, than that *Jephthab* con-
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secrated

sacrificed his Daughter to a State of perpetual
 Virginity. After she had, with her Compan-
 ions, for two Months upon the Moun-
 tains, bewailed her Virginity, *she returned*
unto her Father, says the Text; who did
with her according to his Vow; which he had
vowed. The Assertion you see is positive, Ver. 38, 39
 Yea, but 'tis added, say they, in Explication
 thereof, *and she knew no Man*; that is, she
 continued a Virgin all her Days, leaving no
 Posterity behind her; which in those Times
 was, I own, esteemed one of the greatest of
 earthly Reproaches; the Hopes of having
 the *Messiah* descend from them, prompting
 all the Daughters of *Israel* passionately to
 desire Children. And *this*, continue the
 foresaid Interpreters, was the Thing which
 she and her Companions, for two Months
 together, lamented in the Mountains; *This*
 was the Calamity they went to condole
 with her, and comfort her against, four
 Days every Year. To establish this Noti-
 on, and refute the other, they demand;
 Would *Jephthah*, a Man who had the Spirit
 of the Lord, offer to God a humane Sacri-
 fice, when by the Law he was at Liberty to
 redeem her from Death for a moderate Sum Lev. xxvii,
 of Money? Would not Duty to God, and 2, 3.
 Affection to his only Child, sway him to that
 Redemption? Rather than be at that Ex-
 pence, Wou'd He venture upon an Action
 which was an Abomination to the Lord? Deut. xiii.

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one of those crying Sins for which God expell'd the ancient *Canaanites*, and an express Violation of the *sixth* Commandment? It cannot be. To be short, *Jephthah's* Vow; proceed they, could import no more than this, That Who, or Whatsoever should first come out of his House to meet him, should be consecrated to the Lord, according to its Nature and Capacity: If it was meet for a Burnt-Offering, it should actually be offered up to God as such; if otherwise, it should, in all *proper* Ways, be sacred to his Name and Service. This is, indeed, a plausible Interpretation of that difficult Passage; but such as, I believe, will hardly satisfy a nice Examiner of the whole History. To us, however, 'tis a Case of no great Moment, whether this mighty Hero really offered up his Daughter or not. Let each Man judge in it, as seems to him most reasonable. What if we should suppose, that the Holy Ghost permitted him literally to execute his Vow, as a Punishment for his Temerity, and with a Design to restrain Parents and others, on all Occasions, from unadvised Vows to their Maker? Was it not a Zeal for God, under Circumstances extraordinary, that prompted him to make this Vow? and his *Fidelity*, that afterwards led him to perform it, in what Way soever that was done? And having the true Principle of Faith, can it then be objected, that he did not *die in Faith*,

Faith, especially, since, as before observed, 'tis on account of his Faith, that he is here instanced in, and commended by the Holy Ghost? 'Tis questioned farther yet,

3. Did wrathful vindictive *Samson* die in Faith? *Samson*, I say, who to revenge the Loss of his two Eyes upon the *Philistines*, prayed for, and procured his own Death? Judg. xvi.

To this I answer, in Vindication of *Samson*, 'Tis not improbable that *Samson*, whom the Spirit of God had endued with such extraordinary bodily Strength, so long as he observed the Laws of his *Nazariteship*, and who could now pull down the whole Temple of *Dagon* upon the *Philistines*, ('tis not improbable, I say) that he was pre-mov'd to this Action by him, who is the sole Arbitrer of Life and Death.

If *this* appear, as I believe it will, to all who impartially examine the intire Circumstances of the History alledg'd; why then *Samson's* Behaviour, in desiring the Destruction of those Enemies to God and his People, at the Expence of his own Life, will, I presume, be very justifiable. 'Tis to be remembered also, that being at this Time in a publick Capacity, being by an extraordinary Commission constituted the Judge and Defender of *Israel*, he might, for the Honour of God, and the Deliverance of *Israel* from those devoted Adversaries; expose his own Life, choosing Death in the

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same common Ruins with them, rather than, to preserve his own Life, permit them to escape. Under such Circumstances this is no strange Thing; no Act of Guilt. 'Tis no more than true Heroism; no more than what great Soldiers frequently do. They are content, we see, and count it their truest Glory, rather to lose their Lives in defence of a Post, advantageous to their Army, than yield it to the Enemy. *Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two Eyes.* The Prayer, I allow, sounds somewhat harsh to *Christians*, who are taught the most perfect Charity; but the Fervour and Earnestness of *Samson's* Spirit, his acknowledged Dependence on God, and Confidence in him, considered in Conjunction with the immediate Returns from Heaven now made to it, shew that it was a Prayer the Spirit of God had dictated and approved. Had *Samson* been a malicious inveterate Man; had his Prayer flowed from a Principle of Passion and private Revenge, rather than of Zeal for God, and the true Benefit of *Israel*; Certain it is, that he who *abhors the bloody and deceitful Man*, would never have heard

Ver. 28.

Prov. xxvi. 10. The Curse causeless shall not come, unless it be upon the Head of him, who without Cause imprecates and denounces it.

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This is an undoubted Truth. Upon this Ground then, without going farther into the Debate, may we safely fix our Foot, and pronounce *Samson*, as the inspired Penman before us has done, One of those who has *obtained a good Report through Faith*.

Having thus discovered to you, Who were *All these that died in Faith*, according to the true Meaning of the Text : And having also asserted and vindicated the Interpretation now given of it, I proceed to inquire,

II. What was *That Faith*, wherein all the Saints before-mentioned died : For, says the Text, *These all died in Faith*.

Because there are many Counterfeits of Faith, as of every Thing excellent and valuable ; and but One Faith only that is genuine and useful to the Purposes of a Christian, living and dying ; And because it must be a Thing of fatal Consequence, herein to be mistaken ; I shall therefore, as it becomes me, with the greatest Wariness and Perspicuity, endeavour to explain and state it.

Faith, in the first and most general Acceptation of the Word, is the Assent of the Mind to the Truth of a Proposition upon credible Testimony ; Or upon some other Reason, besides sensible Evidence, or immediate Knowledge. A Divine Faith is such an Assent to the Truth of Divine Revelation, upon a Divine Testimony : As, on the other hand,

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an Human Faith is the like Assent only upon the Credit of Human Testimony. The Faith here intended is a Divine Faith, wrought in us by the Arguments of Divine Testimony and Authority, enforced by the Spirit and Grace of Christ. And 'tis a most just and elegant Definition, which the Apostle to the *Hebrews* has here given us of it, to tell
 Ch. xi. 1. us what it is. *Faith*, says he, (that *Faith*, by which the *Just* shall live, and continue stedfast unto the End in the Cause of Christ, against all Temptations to Wavering and Apostacy) is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen. The Explaining this Definition will, as fully as is needful, explain to us the Thing defin'd.

And here we first see what this Faith is not. 'Tis not a mere speculative Assent to the Word of God as true in general, as in Matters of simple Belief. That Assent indeed is one main Part or Act of Divine Faith; but singly and of it self, it is no more the *Whole* of this Faith, than one Room is the whole House, or one Grace the whole Frame of Graces in a regenerate Christian. Neither is this Faith a confident *Credulity* of we know not *what* and *why*; for then how were it the Reason, the *Evidence*, and Conviction of Things not seen? If it be a Fault in us, with the *Samaritans*, to worship we know not *what*, it must certainly be a greater Fault in us to believe
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we know not what, as the Ground of that Worship, and of all other religious Actions: But the very *Nature* of Faith, calmly considered, shews, that however Persons deceive themselves with empty unmeaning Sounds, such a Faith is no Faith at all, but impossible in the Nature of Things, and to the Reason of all Mankind.

What then is this Divine Faith? To return to the Apostle's Account of it. 'Tis the confident Expectation of Things hoped for, the *Basis* and Foundation of the Christian Hope; *That* without which we could have no Knowledge of Things supernaturally reveal'd, and consequently no Hope of pleasing God on Earth, nor of Rewards from him in the Life to come. 'Tis the convincing Argument, or Demonstration to the Mind, of the Certainty and Reality of those Things which are indiscernible to Flesh and Sense, of which we have no sensible and ocular Demonstration in this World of Trial. 'Tis a rational Belief thereof, wrought in us by Argument and rational Conviction, and a Hope agreeable thereto that cannot be frustrated. 'Tis a Principle that realizes to the Mind its Objects; and those are chiefly the Things of another World; to be discerned by *Faith* only. Everlasting Glory and Salvation with God in Heaven, is its ultimate Scope and End: *Receiving the End of your Faith, even the Salvation*

1 Pet. i. 9. *vation of your Souls.* Faith, in order to that End, looks at, and receives into the Heart, an unseen Saviour, as the necessary Means; *for no Man comes unto the Father*

John xiv. 6. *as his End, but by Christ as the only Way.*

The Divine Wisdom, Authority, and Goodness, are the Source and Spring of this Faith, its original Constitution; his Power, Veracity, and Faithfulness, its fundamental Reason and Support: And hence by a very apt *Periphrasis* 'tis called, the *receiving the Testimony of God*, and therein *setting to our Seal that God is true*, that he is able and faithful. Besides the Principles of Natural Religion, in this Case supposed, the Objects of the Faith described are in general, all God's supernatural Revelations, all Things contained in the holy Scriptures, be they historical Narrations, Prophecies, Doctrines, Precepts, Prohibitions, or Motives of Hope and Fear. And its nearer and more immediate Objects still, are those necessary to the Beginning, Progress, and Consummation of the divine Life in Men. The Apostle has told you what they are. They are Things *unseen*. And what are those? Why, Things, some of them of a *spiritual abstracted Nature*, and so not capable of sensitive Notice and Perception: As the Being, the Nature, Excellence, and Perfections of God, *whom no Man, by corporeal Intuition, has seen at any time, nor can*

can see: The Immortality of the Soul: 1 Tim. vi.
 The necessary immutable Difference of Good ^{16.}
 and Evil: The Beauty, Reasonableness, Ob-
 ligations, and Advantages of real Religion:
 The Spirit's Operations on the Soul in Con-
 version and progressive Holiness: Our spi-
 ritual Aids and Enemies: And the Agency
 of Providence, in regard to the Church and
 World. The Events of Providence, 'tis
 true, are visible, but the Hand that con-
 ducts and manages them, like a Wheel with-
 in a Wheel, secret and invisible, but Faith
 discerns them all. Among the invisible
 Objects of Faith, are likewise undoubtedly
 meant, Works and Occurrences *already past*.
 Of this Kind are the Creation of the World
 by the powerful Word of God, mentioned
Gen. 1. The Fall and Misery of Man by the
 Seduction of Satan: The Erection and Abo-
 lition of the *Jewish* Frame: The Person,
 Incarnation, Sufferings, Death, Resurrecti-
 on, and Ascension of the Son of God to the
 Father's Right Hand: His Mission of the
 Spirit, as a Spirit of Miracles and Holiness:
 The Publication and Confirmation of the
 Christian Religion by his Apostles endued
 therewith. All these Truths and Facts are
 Things to be believed and assented to, be-
 ing no longer now to be seen, than as an
 invisible Cause by its Effects. To these
 add also, All those Invisibles, which, like
 a remote Country, are at too great a Di-
 stance

stance from the Views of Sense. Such as the Existence, Fabrick, and Oeconomy of the intellectual Worlds: The Beatific Vision within the Vail: The Services and Enjoyments of Holy Angels, and the perfected Just Ones in the New Jerusalem: And the Things which God has prepared for them that love him. All this is a Glory yet to be revealed. What the adopted Children of God shall be, does not yet appear: The Fruitions and Happiness of the Saints in Heaven are hid from our Eyes; as are also, the Terrors of the Lord on Sinners in the lowest Hell. The vain Wit of Man has endeavoured to descry the Place or Region, where the Forsaken of God shall receive their proper Recompence: But can that be described which is unseen, and so imperfectly known? The rich Man is said to lift up his Eyes in Hades, or the unseen World, where the Souls of wicked Men go, upon leaving the Body. Before God Hell is naked, and Destruction has no Covering; but its Particulars are concealed from us in impenetrable Darkness, farther than Faith reveals them. And to add no more, Some Things in the Gospel Revelation are unseen, because their Accomplishment, like Prophecy, is yet future and reserved unto the Fulness of Time, which the Father has put in his own Power. Such are, Christ's second coming in the Glory of the Father with all the

holy

holy Angels, the Resurrection of the Dead, the general Judgment at the great Day, and Matt. xxiv, the State of everlasting Retribution, wherein ^{36.} all the present seeming Inequalities of Providence shall be exactly adjusted, and all Men reap in Quality and Degree, as here they have sown. These are *some* of the *Things un-* Gal. vi. 7, *seen*; for, were it possible, I pretend not in ^{8.} this Discourse, *fully* to recount them.

Some of these Reason and Sense can indeed demonstrate; as the Being and Perfections of God, by the Creation and Preservation of the World; the Immortality of the Soul, Rom. i. 29. from its natural essential Operations; and a future State of Recompence, for the Vindication of Providence, and the necessary Enforcement of his Laws upon Mankind: Yet with how great Weakness and Imperfection Reason alone does this, the Writings of the sublimest Heathen Moralists, do at this Day manifestly testify.

Many other Things, of the greatest Benefit and Necessity to the Christian Life, there are, which without a Divine Revelation discovering them, must have been absolutely and for ever unknown, because absolutely above the Search of unassisted natural Reason. And now that we have this Revelation, of what Use or Benefit can it be to Mankind, if *Faith* receive it not? Can it instruct? Can it reform? Can it edify, where it is not known and assented to? Is it not *Faith* that gives

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to it its Life and Energy? Is it not *Faith* that is *the Evidence*, Argument, and Conviction to the Mind, of the Certainty of those *unseen Things* which it declares and reveals? Undoubtedly so. This Faith, grounded on the Testimony of the true and infallible God, is that which makes them appear real and *substantial*, present and permanent to the Mind, and influential on the Heart and Life, according to their Nature and Excellence, and our own Concernment in them, though absent and future.

'Tis *Faith*, that makes promised Good Things, by a kind of Anticipation, to be actually existent and enjoyed by us; for being promised by God, who cannot lye, if we believe his Word, we cannot but be as confident we shall have them, as if we had them already in Possession. 'Tis *Faith*, that is the Root and Reason of our *Hope*. For what is that *Hope*, but the Hope of absent Good, visible only to Faith? the assured Expectation of Deliverance from all inward and outward Evils, and of the Fruition of eternal Glory by Jesus Christ? 'Tis a Hope of the best Things; of the greatest and noblest Attainments; a Hope built on the Promises of God, productive of all Divine and Christian Fruits; and a Security of Enjoyment, as good as its Object is great. *Things hoped for*, are absent and future, as an Inheritance in Reversion, and so seem not to subsist.

Hope

Hope that is seen, is not Hope, says the Apostle, *for what a Man sees, why does he yet hope for?* But *Faith* gives them a *Subsistence*. By believing and hoping in the Promises, we in a Manner enjoy them; as by believing the Threatnings, we see a Judgment in them before they are felt. As we believe and hope, so we *believe and tremble*, and *flee from the Wrath of God*, while it is yet *to come*. And thus is *Faith* a substantial, well-grounded Persuasion of *Things unseen*, and a confident Expectation of *Things hoped for* from God, upon the Credit of his Word and Promise. This, in short, is the true *Nature* of Divine *Faith*, of that *Faith* whereby the Saints of the Old Testament lived, wherein they died, and of the Hopes enkindled and maintained in them thereby.

But there is yet another Way whereby this great Principle of *Faith* may be farther illustrated and described; and that is by bringing into View some of its genuine inseparable Fruits and Effects: For by these may it as certainly be distinguished, as a Tree by its Fruits. And without multiplying Words, or departing from the Context, there are in it Instances in this Kind, more than sufficient evidently to declare it to us. 'Tis not in the Soul a dormant Habit, as Seed in stony Ground, or Life in Persons asleep or in a Swoon; but an active, operative

Jam. ii. 22. tive Principle, discoverable and *perfected*
by Works. 'Tis a Root of Universal filial
 Obedience to God; to all his Laws, as
 enlarg'd, explain'd, and enforc'd by Christ
 and his Apostles. 'Tis the Principle of all
 great and honourable Atchievements for
 God and the Redeemer in the World. If
 ever it be seated in the Soul, it will have
 a real and visible Effect upon our whole
 Man, according to the Nature of the
 Things believed, the Degree of our Per-
 swasion, and our moral Temper, Capacity,
 Eph. v. 9. and Disposition. As *the Fruit of the Spirit*,
 it will break forth and shew it self *in all*
Goodness, Righteousness and Truth; in a
 faithful, steady Regard to God, and to all
 the Notifications of his Will, proportion-
 ably to the Evidence accompanying them.
 For Instance, we shall see the Certainty and
 Loveliness of Divine Truth, in all the great
 Doctrines of Faith, and the Reality, Worth,
 and Excellence of the Promises. How
 strong a Proof, and Instance in this Kind,
 are the *Patriarchs*! Examine the Context.
 By the Eye of Faith they *saw the Promises*;
 saw into their high and excellent Nature,
 their Stability, and most certain future Per-
 formance. They saw the Things which
 God, by Promise, had given out for the
 Comfort of *Abraham* and his Posterity;
 such as a numerous Issue, the Conquest and
 Possession of *Canaan*, the *Messiah* in the
 Flesh

Flesh descended from them, *in whom all* Gen. xviii
the Nations of the Earth should be blessed; ^{18.}

a glorious Resurrection and heavenly Immortality beyond the Grave. These Things they saw; *saw them afar off*, as thro' a descrying Glass, at the Distance of many Generations to come; as we now foresee the Destruction of Antichrist, our Lord's glorious Coming, and the Consummation of all Things. Abraham *rejoic'd to see my* John viii
Day, (says Christ to the Jews,) *my Coming* ^{56.}
into the World, and he saw it by Faith, and was glad. So the Fathers, before and after the Flood, saw the Promises. They saw them, *and were perswaded of them*, because, as Sarah in another Case, they *judg'd him faithful who had promis'd.* Heb. xii
 Again, II.

Wherever the Faith of unseen future Things obtains in the Heart, as a vital Principle, it will raise the Heart above this World; form it to a sincere, delightful Closure with the Covenant and Promises of God, propounded in his Word; it will diffuse its Influence upon the several Affections of Hope, Love, and Joy. See this exemplified also in the *Patriarchs*. Having got a Sight of the Promises, they chose and *embrac'd them*, they consented to them, and confided in them. They embraced them with Love and Desire, with Delight and Joy; as dear Friends,
 meeting

meeting after a long Separation, embrace each other in their Arms; and as Mariners, after a long and hazardous Voyage, carefs the welcome Shore. They embraced them as most true and good in themselves, most desirable and precious unto them. And the first Ground of all this Acceptance, Confidence, and Joy in the Promises, was their *Faith*; in the same manner as Christians, *1 Pet. i. 8.* tho' now they see not the glorified Redeemer, yet believing in him, by means of *Faith*, they love him, and rejoice in him with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.

And for our farther Conviction still in so important a Subject, I add, that this *Faith*, if truly Divine and saving, will manifest its Power and Virtue, as in all divine and heavenly Affections, so in answerable *Practical* Regards towards God, our Neighbour, and our selves, in the intire Series of our Conversation. We shall *Pfal. cxix. 128.* esteem all God's Precepts, concerning all Things, to be right, and hate every false *Heb. xi. 33.* Way. In this Faith we shall work Righteousness. *Mat. xxiii. 35.* With righteous *Abel* we shall serve God, the greatest and best of Beings, with our best, with the best of our Time and Strength, and with the best and fattest of our Flocks. It will be in us a Principle of singular and sincere Piety towards God, teaching us, as *Enoch*, *Noah*,—to walk with *24. vi. 9.* God in a religious, exemplary Course of Life,

Life, amidst all the Scofts and hard Speeches of an impious and profane Generation. After the Example of faithful *Abraham*, Gen. xii. this Faith will induce us to quit our Idols,^{1.} our Country, Kindred, Friends, and all the Relations and Possessions of this World, in Confidence of an Inheritance in the heavenly *Canaan*. Notwithstanding ever so many apparent Difficulties, it will make us truly willing, and ready with our own Hands, to sacrifice our *Isaac*, all, even Chap. xxii. our dearest Hopes and Comforts, to God at his Command and Call; to cut off a right Hand, or Foot, yea, to pluck out a right Eye, *when they offend*, and cast them from us; yea, to deliver up even our very Lives to God requiring them, rather than by with-holding them, to incur his eternal Displeasure. Luke xiv. This is a Faith that, with^{26, 33.} *Moses*, will instruct and incline us, at Years of Discretion, to prefer God and Religion, a pure Conscience, and the Hopes of everlasting Glory in Heaven, to all the Splendor, Royalty, and Enticements of a seducing depraved World. By a believing Respect to, and Expectation of, a more abundant Recompence of Reward from God hereafter, we shall chuse to abandon the Society of the Wicked, and to endure all sorts of Affliction, Persecution, and Reproach for him, with all true militant *Israelites*, his Worshippers, rather than

than for the short Enjoyment of sinful
 Luke xiv. Pleasures, to fall under the almighty, ever-
 24. lasting Wrath of him that is invisible.

Perfwaded of the Promises of an heavenly Country, and having our main, our ultimate Happiness and Hopes therein, we shall confess our selves *Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth*. We shall study to pass inoffensively, patiently, and chearfully, thro' this troublesome, uncertain World, in our Journey towards a quiet and happy Settlement in the next. Such was the Character, Condition, and Endeavour of the *Patriarchs* here below. They confess'd themselves *Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth*, living and acting entirely as such, travelling from one Place to another in a very troublesome, unsettled Condition. And as all that declare themselves Strangers and Pilgrims, must make it appear that they are so, by continually seeking their own proper Country; so did the Saints now discoursed of. With the greatest Ardor and Constancy of Mind they desired, sought, and hoped for *another Country*, a fix'd and quiet Habitation. And which was that? Not *Ur* of the *Chaldees*: That being their native Country, might indeed be thought dearer to them than any other; but it was not so; for *truly*, as the Holy Ghost reasons, *if they had been mindful of that Country, from whence they came out, they might,*

Heb. xi.
 13.

might, in the Space of two hundred Years, ^{Heb. xi. 15.} which pass'd betwixt *Abraham's* Departure from *Chaldea* and *Jacob's* Death, *have had Opportunity to have returned thither*, the Distance betwixt the two Places being but inconsiderable : Yea, but the Country they fought, was a *better Country* than any in this World ; better than that which they had quitted, yea, better than the Land of Promise, wherein they now sojourn'd. ^{It Ver. 16.} was not an earthly, but an *heavenly Country*, view'd only by Faith's Prospective ; a Country wherein they might dwell and rest for ever, when their Pilgrimage on Earth was finished ; a *City which God had prepared for them* in the Country of Heaven, the *Jerusalem* which is above. And all this they did by means of *Faith*.

Yea, and by the same excellent Principle, as the inspired Penman continues to shew, they achiev'd all those noble Explôits, which, in the Scriptures of Truth, are recorded of them. Confiding in the Promise of God, who call'd them to it, *Joshua, David*, ^{Ver. 33.} and many of the Judges, subdu'd Kingdoms. *Abraham, Phineas, and Samuel*, wrought Righteousness ; in all Capacities acted as righteous Men, and, to their utmost Endeavours, propagated the Love and Practice of universal Righteousness amongst Mankind. *Abraham and David*, and other Worthies, obtain'd Promises, both general

and special. Others, as *Samson*, *David*, and *Daniel*, by Faith in the Power and Presence of God, stopp'd the Mouths of
 Ver. 34. Lions. Others, as the three Children in *Nebuchadnezzar's* Furnace, quench'd the consuming Violence of Fire, so that not so much as the Smell thereof pass'd upon either their Persons or Garments. Other Saints likewise, in the Virtue of a Divine Faith, escap'd the Edge of the Sword: Thus *David* escap'd the Sword of *Goliath*, and of *Saul*; the *Jews* the Sword of *Haman*, and *Elijah* the Sword of *Abaziah* and *Jezebel*. Out of Weakness some were made strong, as *Gideon* with his three hundred Men, *Samson*, *Jehoshaphat*, and *Jonathan*; and miraculously recover'd from mortal bodily Distempers, as *Job* and *H Ezekiah*. By Faith in God, many of those who were Men of great Infirmary and Fear, grew valiant in Fight, and turn'd to Flight the numerous Armies of the Aliens. Thro' this divine Faith, Women, as the Widow of *Sarepta* and the *Skunamite*, receiv'd their dead Sons rais'd to Life again.

And the Faith that enabled them to do such great Things, enabled others, than those now mention'd, to suffer as great; for they were tortur'd for their Religion, refusing Deliverance on the sinful Terms their Persecutors offer'd it, because by Faith in God's Promises, they believ'd and hop'd
 for

for a Resurrection to an incomparable better Life. Others had Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings from their wicked Enemies; yea, moreover, of Bonds and Imprisonments, as *Joseph, Samson, Micaiah*, and *Jeremiah*. And to demonstrate that there was no Evil which they did not endure, some were ston'd; as *Zacharias* the Son of *Jehoiada*, and *Naboth*. Some were sawn asunder; others try'd by hot Irons, and other fiery Torments. Some were slain with the Sword; others, like Vagabonds, wander'd about in Sheep-Skins and Goat-Skins, being destitute of all outward Things, afflicted and tormented. And tho', on account of their Faith, and many glorious Atchievements thereby, they were the excellent of the Earth, Men of whom the World was not worthy; yet were they expell'd human Society, and forc'd to wander about in Deserts, and on Mountains, and in Dens and Caves of the Earth, the Refuge and Shelter of wild Beasts. All which terrible Evils they chearfully and patiently endur'd, out of Conscience toward the invisible God, in the Faith of his eternal Acceptance and Salvation, and in Hope of the heavenly Country, and Recompence of Reward promis'd to his afflicted Servants hereafter. Judge you then of the *Nature* of this Divine *Faith*, by its Power and Prevalence: Judge of it, I say, by these its excellent

Heb. xi.
99.

cellent Fruits on the Mind, Heart, and Conversation of the Saints, whose Example is celebrated in this xith Chapter; for *all these obtained a good Report thro' Faith.*

And thus much for my *second* General Head, where I propos'd to shew, *what was that Faith*, in which these good People liv'd, and wherein they also *died*: *These all died in Faith.* The Sum is this: It was a Faith not Human, but supernatural and Divine; a Faith that serv'd instead of Sight; that credited all the Truths of God, all which he had any ways reveal'd, foretold, and asserted to them; a Faith that really believ'd and embrac'd, that fully and firmly accepted and confided in all the Promises of God made known to them. It was such a Belief of Things unseen and future; such a deep and thorow Conviction of the Truth of God's Word, Promises and Threatnings, of the certain Reality of the Rewards and Punishments of the Life to come; as enabled them, against all Temptations, to obey God in the full and assured Expectation of everlasting glorious Rewards from him after Death. It was a Faith lively and operative, that shone forth and express'd it self in all due and proper Fruits; in all those holy Actings and Exertions upon God, and Duties towards Men, which arise out of it, as Effects from their Root and Cause. This, I say, was *that Faith*, that Divine Principle,

ple, Perswasion, and Profession wherein all the foremention'd Worthies died. I now come to inquire,

III. What it is to *die in Faith*? And the general Answer is this: To *die in Faith*, as here intended of all the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Saints of the Old Testament, implies, that they finished their Course, compleated their Warfare, and overcame the last Enemy Death and the Grave, by the Power of Faith in God, and future unseen Things. In particular, *These all died in Faith*, implies,

I. That the Faith of all these eminent Servants of God was according to Rule. It was a Faith seated in them, as a fixed habitual Principle. It was a Faith that had hold of their Hearts, deep rooting therein, like the good Seed sown in good Ground. It was the Faith which the Heart-searching God approves, which is *of the Operation of God* by his Spirit, and conformable to the Tenor of his Commands delivered to them. It was a Faith which assents to all the Truths of God, which embraces all his exceedingly great and precious Promises, and relies on his Power, Wisdom, and Faithfulness for the punctual Performance of them. 'Tis a Faith which annihilates this World, whose *Fashion passes away*, and ^{1 Cor. vii.} which realizes and substantiates to the Mind ^{31.} that which is to come. The Saints here ^{Heb. xi.} spoken ^{1.}

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spoken of, departed hence possess'd of such a Faith as this. *These All died in Faith:* This implies also,

2. That All these mentioned Worthies died in the actual Perswasion, full Exercise, and steady Profession of their Faith. They died owning God, as God Almighty and All-sufficient, and as their own God in Covenant with them. They died acting Faith on him to the last, and in the last Minutes of their Lives, according to the several glorious Representations he had made of himself to them, and the manifold Encouragements given them to confide in him. They died *True Believers*, truly wise and good Men, pleasing to God, whom they saw only by Faith. After a Life of Believing, holy Submission, Self-denial, and Obedience to God, they went to their Graves in the full Assurance of Faith, perswaded of the Truth of all God's Revelations, and of the certain exact Accomplishment of all his Promises to themselves and theirs, in the proper Season thereof. Farther yet,

3. By these good Persons dying in Faith, is likewise meant, that their Faith at Death was eminently strong and lively; so strong in the Habit, and lively in its Exercise, as to be a Comfort to themselves, and a Pattern to us. In that Hour of Trial, under the greatest Tribulations and Sufferings for Righteousness Sake, under the most threatening

ning Appearances of Terror and Distress; when all Creature-dependencies and Expectations fail'd, and the united Malice of Men and Devils assaulted them, and did their utmost to shut up their Way to Heaven, or however to render it to them as sharp and painful as possible, they still kept their Ground. Their Assent to the Word and Promises of God, under such great Disadvantages, was not feeble and infirm, not weak and fluctuating betwixt Hope and Fear, as a Ship in a Storm, or an uneven Ballance in the Air. In Relation to future good Things, they were not of a doubtful, suspended Mind; such as many of the Heathen Philosophers exprest, in relation to the Measures of Providence, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State. They were not, as *Agrippa*, only *almost perswaded* to real Religion: Nor were they of *little* Matt. xiv. 30, 31, *Faith*, as *Peter* on the Seas, and the Disciples when Christ was asleep with them in the Ship: No; but remarkably firm and Ch. viii. 25, 26, steady, in Opposition thereto. Their *Hearts*, as the Psalmist's Expression is, were *fixed, trusting in the Lord*; trusting in him for Support, and Deliverance, and for a Resurrection to a better and a happier Life, in the invisible heavenly Glory. Their Reliance on God, being well grounded, was a kind of Anchor to their Souls, an Instrument or Heb. vi. 19, Principle that held them firm and stedfast

Rom. iv.
18, &c.

in the roughest and most tempestuous Seasons, at least from being overwhelmed in Darkness and Despair, as is noted of *Abraham* in another Case: *Against* all natural Hope, they believed in Hope, according to that which was spoken for their Encouragement: And being not weak in Faith, they staggered not at, disputed not against, nor doubted of, the Promises of God through Unbelief; but were strong in Faith, giving Glory to God, the Glory of his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, All-sufficiency, and Truth; being fully perswaded that what he had promised, he was able to perform, because having all Power in Heaven and on Earth, he is able to perform all Things consistent with his natural essential Attributes and Perfections. Their Faith in the Promises was such, as carried them vigorously and advantageously through all Difficulties to their Scope and End, as a Ship that enters the Harbour with full Sail. Their Faith was as strong now at their Death, as ever it was in their Life-time, having still the same substantial immutable Ground and Reason for it to rely upon, the infinite Power, Credit, and Veracity of their Maker. They expired, embracing the Promises of invisible good Things to come: They set to them this Seal, their dying Testimony and Declaration, that they believed them all to be true, and such as might be depended on in the Way of Well-do-

doing. All their Happiness they ventur'd upon this Bottom, upon Faith in the Promises of God, which is the fullest, and indeed all the Certainty and Security, that Things future and invisible are capable of. And was not this eminent, was not this most remarkable Faith? Most certainly, So the Apostle thought. 'Tis a Faith to their Praise in all the Churches, and will be throughout all the World, where-ever it shall be spoken of.

By such powerful distinguish'd Faith and Expectation of unseen future Things it is, that these good Men *obtain'd a good Report.* In this Faith they died. Persecution and Sufferings encounter'd them daily, but they apostatized not from the Belief and Profession of their Religion. They did not *draw back* in Heart, Word, or Practice; because that would have been abominable unto God, and destructive to themselves, therefore they continued in the Faith, *believing unto the saving of the Soul.* To preserve a short uncertain Life, they did not as *Hymeneus and Alexander*, in their Extremity, make Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience. They did not quit their Profession, and throw All overboard, as Mariners in a Storm. Oh! No: They held the Beginning of their Confidence, their sustaining Faith, *stedfast unto the End.* They were faithful to the Death, in the Belief of another World, and the assured Hope of

Heb.xi. 2.

Heb.x. 38,

39.

1 Tim. i.

19.

Heb. iii.

14.

14. ev.ii.10.

eternal Glory therein. They died, trusting themselves and all their Concernments intirely in the Hands of the unchangeable God. Thus *they all died in Faith*. Again, expounding the Text as it stands connected with the foregoing and following Words, it must imply this farther Truth, namely,

4. That in Consequence of such a Death, they now *inherit the Promises*, stand intitled to all the Blessings of this Faith, and shall be made the complete eternal Partakers of them. They have a Right thereunto; not of Nature, nor by any proper intrinsic Merit of their own; not as due to their Faith, Hope, and Obedience, strictly and *legally* considered: For then Righteousness must be by the Law, the Reward not of Grace but of Debt, and vain Man would have whereof to boast; which cannot consist with the Honour of God, and the Settlement of the Gospel. No, in no wise. Their Right to all the Blessings of Faith and Salvation, flows only from the Bowels of the Mercies of their God; from the free Promise, Constitution, and Appointment of their heavenly Father; in Virtue of the Purchase and Mediation of the *Messiah, the Lamb slain from the* *Rev. xiii. 8.* *Foundation of the World*; and in regard of those glorious Benefits vouchsaf'd to them already with him. They have indeed already rested from their Labours, and are enter'd into Peace. They now no longer *walk by Faith*,
but

but by Sight. Their Faith is chang'd into Vision. *The Vail is rent, and they are enter'd into the most holy Place.* They now behold *Pfal. xvii.* God's Face in Righteousness, and are satisfied^{15.} with his transforming, felicitating Likeness; and in the Fulness of Time, when God has brought all his preparatory Works to Maturity, they, together with the whole Household of Faith, shall be made perfect. They shall then receive the compleat Substance and Enjoyment of the Promises. *The Crown of* ^{2 Tim. iv.} *Righteousness, which was laid up for them,* ^{8.} shall, by the Lord the righteous Judge, be given them at that Day. 'Tis then that ^{Rev. iii.} Christ will take them, and set them down^{21.} with himself on his own Throne; and will give them Power over the Nations, even as he receiv'd of his Father..

Having thus explain'd my Text in all the Parts of it, that which now remains, is,

II. In the *second Place*, to improve this Character and Encomium of these eminent departed Saints. And this I shall endeavour to do, suitably to the Tenor of such Examples, and the mournful Providence at this Time commemorated by us. Various indeed might be the doctrinal Instructions from what has been discours'd on the Subject, and worthy of our Notice; but I pass them all, to come at once to what more immediately concerns our Practice. And the great Instance of Duty pointed out to

us on this Occasion, and from this Subject, is *this*; namely, to labour all that in us lies to live in Faith, that therein we may at last also die. And for us under the Gospel-Dispensation to *die in Faith*, is to die resigning our selves into the Hands of the everliving God, thro' Jesus Christ, in a real and stedfast Perswasion of the Truth of the Christian Religion; of all the great Doctrines of Faith reveal'd to us in *the glorious Gospel of the blessed God*, and in the full and firm Belief of the punctual Accomplishment, as of all former Prophecies and Facts, so of all the Promises of God, which relate to the Church in general, and to our selves, and our surviving Families and Relations in particular. Was it not thus that

Gen. *Israel died? And Israel said unto Joseph,*
 xlviii. 21. *Behold, I die; but God will be with you, and bring you again out of this Egypt, where they then sojourned, into the Land of your*

Luke xxiii. *Fathers.* Was it not thus that *Joseph* and
 46. *David*, that the Man *Christ Jesus*, and his

Acts vii. *holy Martyr Stephen* died; delivering up
 59. themselves to God, in Confidence of all those unseen future Things, which were the Subject of sacred Revelation, and the Matter of God's Promise to them? According to the different Dispensations of Faith and Light, the Faith of the Saints no doubt had its different Measures, both in the Habit and Exercise; but that Difference allow'd

allow'd for, it was in *this Manner*, now describ'd, they all died, which is *Dying in Faith*. For a Close, and as so many Arguments to quicken you to the greater Seriousness, Care and Diligence, in your Endeavours thus at last to die, suffer me to leave with you the following Considerations. And,

1. Consider then, that *Dying in Faith*, as before explain'd, is such a manner of Dying; as the *Faith* it self we profess instructs us to, and recommends; the Faith of the Old Testament, and the Faith of the New; the Faith of the Patriarchs and Prophets, of Christ and his Apostles, who *all died in Faith*. To suppose you ignorant of this, were to suppose you ignorant of the whole Bible, which gives a uniform Testimony hereunto. 'Tis an obvious Argument this, and of such Moment and Consequence, that without a copious Enlargement upon it, I am willing to hope you will be brought to the Endeavours now mentioned. However, lest that should not be, let me intreat you to consider farther,

2. That this *Dying in Faith*, is the only *safe* Manner of Dying; the only way certainly to escape, the Horrors of an accusing, enrag'd, despairing Conscience, the Wrath of God, and the everlasting Damnation of Hell. Christians, these are no empty, chimerical Sounds; nor cunningly devised Fables,

bles, to terrify the Ignorant and Unwary; but Realities, tho' invifible. Hear the Words of the Holy Ghost, *He that believeth not, is condemned already.* As a Malefactor, he is under Sentence of Death, tho' Execution be respited to give room for Repentance, if he will but turn and live. But *he that believes*, and consents to the Gospel-Covenant, *shall not come into Condemnation, but is passed from Death to Life*, really and relatively, spiritually and judicially. His State is good, his Condition safe; the Promise, Covenant, and Oath of God, are his Security. A Man may die a learned Man, a rich Man, a powerful Man, but will these at the last avail him any Thing? Will *Riches profit in the Day of Wrath?* Oh! No. 'Tis his dying a true Believer, a sincere Christian, justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified to the Image, and by the Spirit of our God. This it is, that is every Man's eternal Safety, for so has the righteous, unchangeable God ordain'd. As ever then we would effectually provide for our own Safety, should not we, to our utmost, endeavour thus to die? Oh! can it be an indifferent Thing what becomes of us at Death? Is it possible? *Is our Strength the Strength of Stones? or is our Flesh of Brass*, that we dread not the Arrows of the Almighty? *Can our Hearts endure, or can our Hands be strong, in the Day that the Lord*

John iii.
18.John v.
24.Prov. xi.
4.

Job vi. 12.

Ezek. xiii.
14.

Lord shall deal with us? Woe, Woe, yea, everlasting Woe to us, if we die destitute of this Faith! Should it be so, we shall *not see Life, the Wrath of God shall abide upon us.* And who can tell us how dreadful a Judgment that is! *Who knows the Power of his Anger?* 'tis superior to our greatest Fears. I go on and add;

3. This *Dying in Faith* is also, in Fact and Experience, the most comfortable Manner of Dying. And if ever Comfort be needful, it must certainly be at such a Season, when we are losing our Hold of all outward Helps and Comforts, and conflict with the King of Terrors. What must then become of us, if we have not *the Secret of the Lord* with us? if in the Multitude of our Thoughts within us, his Comforts are not then vouchsaf'd, to refresh and delight our Souls? And which Way can they be expected? which Way can they be deriv'd into us, without an active, lively Faith in that God and Redeemer, by whom we live, at whose Pleasure, and into whose Hands we die?

I will not say, that the Heirs of the Grace of Life are *always* joyous and comfortable in themselves on the Confines of Death, when their *Life draws nigh unto the Grave*; for then, I am persuaded, I should say a Thing which Experience has been known to refute. But this I may truly

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say, that for the most part it is so. For,
 Isa. xxxii. according to that *sure Word of Prophecy,*
 17. *the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace,*
great inward Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness,
Quietness and Assurance for ever.

And when it is otherwise with expiring Christians, a very rational and satisfactory Account, I apprehend, might be given of it, especially had we a thorow Knowledge of the secret Passages of their Lives and Demeanor before God. The natural Fears of Death, as well in Believers as Unbelievers; the Prevalence of Pain, Anguish and Sickness at that Time; the Smitings of Conscience, it may be, upon the Remembrance of some particular heinous Transgressions, or general incircumspect Walking with God; the Risings of Corruption, and *the fiery Darts of the wicked One* then shot into them; are Things, which, by hindring the lively Actings of Grace in good Men, may hinder their Comfort on a Death-bed; but without any Detriment to their final State, which depends on other Causes. And God, who is a *free Spirit*, may, at that Time, in great Wisdom and Justice, withdraw from them the Light of his Countenance; as from his dear Son, in his extreme Agony, and on the Cross; that following him in *Sufferings, and being made conformable unto his Death,* their Victory thro' and with him may be the more glorious at the last. Herein
 the

Phil. iii.
 10.

the Ways of God, it must be own'd, are a great Deep. Some Christians, who *thro' Fear of Death, have been struggling all their Life-time in Bondage*, have found an easy and comfortable Escape at once; whilst Others, who have lived in great Hope and Peace all their Days, have had their sharpest Conflict at the last. That is entirely as it pleases God. A Christian, in the near View of Death, *buffeted by Satan, and press'd almost out of Measure above Strength*, from the Apprehension of unpardon'd Sin, and of God's Displeasure against him on that Account, is what we sometimes see; and a most compassionate, affecting Sight it is: But yet, in that *Hour of the Powers of Darkness*, there is as visible a Difference betwixt the Conflicts of such good Men, and the Agonies of the Ungodly, as there is between the truly settled Peace of the one, and the infatuating Stupefaction of the other. Still, in their darkest Hours, good Men find Supports from God, tho' deny'd his abounding Consolations. They will *ascribe Righteousness to their Maker, Righteous art thou, O Lord*; and shame and condemn themselves. They can cast themselves intirely upon the Grace and Mercy of God in Christ, and venture out of the Body, in Confidence that he will *shew them the Path of Life*. Tho' their Faith be not glorified in Triumphant, it is glorified in Depending;

which is as sure, tho' not so joyous a Way to the Kingdom of their Father, as the other.

Job viii. 20. It cannot be, that God should *cast away a perfect Man*; that he should totally forsake the Work of his own Hands, tho' he sometimes forbear to shine upon it in Death. The Sun may set in a dark and cloudy Sky, but it is the Sun still, and will rise gloriously in the other World.

Rom. viii. 38, 39. *Neither Death, nor Life, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate the Saints from the Love of God, embracing them in Christ Jesus our Lord.* I proceed to observe,

4. *Dying in Faith*, is that Kind of Death which is recommended to us by the brightest Examples of real Religion, in all the Ages of the World. And shall not Examples incite and animate our Endeavours thus to die? Examples, I say, which are ever propos'd, both as instructive in Duty, and persuasive to it? Is it not just? Is it not reasonable? Is it not necessary? *Wherefore then, seeing we are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, and Encouragements to this Duty, let us look daily to them. Let us look, in the first Place, unto Jesus, the most perfect and complete Example of real Religion, living and dying; for herein has he left us an Example, that we should follow his Steps.* Let us look over the whole Catalogue of renowned Saints, in this Chapter, as Patterns to us also of such

such a Life and Death. And, since 'tis enjoin'd us, to be *Followers of all them, who* ^{Heb. vi.} *thro' Faith and Patience are now inheriting* ^{12.} *the Promises*; I do, as indeed I may with great Truth and Justice, to the same Purpose, exhort you likewise to look unto the Example of our dear departed Sister, who died also *in, and according to the Faith.*

I am no Friend to Funeral Panegyrics, nor do I ordinarily care how little is spoken concerning the Dead; because of the frequent Abuse made thereof, by Men of corrupt and weak Minds, among the Living. But where they have obtain'd a good Report thro' Faith; where a true and exemplary Testimony can be given, such as that which I shall now briefly give of the Deceas'd; this, I trust, will have no such ill Effects: On the contrary, I hope it may be very advantageous to the Relatives, Friends and Acquaintance of the Deceas'd, as it certainly will be to the Honour of God, and his rich Grace.

By a Writing under her Hand, compar'd with other Testimonies, it appears to me that she became acquainted with God betimes. By Means of a Fit of Sickpess, about thirty Years ago, wherein she apprehended her own Unpreparedness for Death, which then threatned her, it was her Desire and Resolution, in the Strength of Divine Grace, to make her Peace with God. This she

she did by a Covenant-Devotedness of her self to him, on Gospel-Foundations, against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. These Engagements to God solemnly enter'd into, she also as solemnly seal'd with him, in Communion with the Church under the Pastoral Care of her worthy Uncle, Mr. *Benjamin Merriman*, at *Newbury in Berks*, the Place of her Nativity; whose Ministry she confesses was made eminently useful to her in the Knowledge of Christ, and for whom therefore she always retain'd the greatest Esteem.

Upon her Recovery from that Sickness, which in her Papers she mentions as useful to her, she expresses her self in Words to this Effect:

“Tis my Desire to make Choice of Christ
 “ now in my Health and Strength. To
 “ form me unto this Desire and Choice,
 “ all my Afflictions have been necessary.
 “ So far as I know of my self, there is no
 “ Sin which I do not desire may be mortified
 “ in me, by the Spirit and Grace of Christ.
 “ From all Sin would I be freed, rather
 “ than live in any. I bless God, who has
 “ open'd my Eyes to see my miserable
 “ Estate by Nature; who, by his free
 “ Grace, has convinc'd me of the Necessity
 “ of an Interest in Christ, and his Benefits;
 “ and also, that of my self alone I can do
 “ nothing truly and spiritually good. I
 “ bless

“ bless God, who has drawn me with the
“ Cords of his Love unto Jesus Christ, who
“ in my Esteem *is altogether lovely*, and
“ thro’ whom alone I can be made happy
“ for ever. ’Tis my Desire, and my Reso-
“ lution, to take Christ, as he is offer’d in
“ the Gospel, in all his great and blessed
“ Offices ; and thro’ his Spirit working in
“ me, and his Righteousness, according to
“ the Gospel-Covenant, imputed to me, I
“ trust I shall find Mercy with God.”

The Principles, of which she then declar’d her Belief, and which, as it appears, she afterwards grew up in, and unto, were such as these : Namely, the Being and Perfections of the One God in three Divine Persons ; the Guilt, Impotence, and Misery of Man, as fallen ; the Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death of the Christ of God, his glorious Resurrection and Ascension, his prevalent Intercession, and the Administration of his mediatorial Kingdom, and his final Coming and Appearance ; the Fulness, Perfection, and Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures ; the Efficacy and Necessity of the Spirit’s Agency, to restore Sinners to the divine Likeness, Presence, and Favour ; to instruct, sanctify, and comfort them in the Ways of God ; the real and manifold Obligations upon Christians, to live to God in all the Duties of the Christian Life, and to the Redeemer who *bought* them with his

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own most precious Blood; the Benefit and Necessity of constant Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in all Acts of publick and private Worship; the Safety of Believers in Christ, both in Life and Death; the Soul's Return to God at the Instant of its Separation; the Resurrection of the Body by the Almighty Power of Christ; and the compleat Happiness of the entire Nature, with God and the Redeemer, in the Church triumphant for ever.

The Sight of a Rainbow also in her younger Years, as I have heard her observe, made such a lively and lasting Impression on her Mind concerning the Covenant-Faithfulness of God, as led her to a proper Dependence on him, and Comfort from him, in After-Life; and the accidental Sight of that same Token of God's Faithfulness in the Clouds, two or three Days before her Change, still more and more enlarg'd and confirm'd her therein. She enter'd not upon conjugal Life without prior serious Engagements to God and Christ, and the well-grounded Hopes of his Favour and Acceptance in the Redeemer. And, as it might reasonably be expected, from a Mind so form'd and enlighten'd, so cultivated and improv'd, she became an Example in all the Relations of Life, filling them up with proper Duty; and instructing, admonishing, and encouraging

raging her Consort, Children and Servants, in the true Fear of God, against Temptation and Infirmary. God also, on many signal Occasions, was pleased to make use of her as a Comforter to his afflicted Servants elsewhere in the World; and indeed had remarkably fitted her for that Office, by a natural Vivacity of Temper, and by Means of the Comforts wherewith she herself, from Time to Time, had been comforted of God.

Firm was she in the Communion and Worshipp of *Protestant-Dissenters*; and zealous for the *Liberty wherewith Christ has made his People free*; but never thought it so right, to recommend it by the Heat of Controversy with her Fellow Christians, as by a Temper and Conversation worthy of her high Calling and Profession.

From a Course of many Instances, here industriously wav'd, it appears, that she liv'd a Life of Faith in the providential Care of a faithful God, in constant Views of, and under the Impressions of, unseen eternal Things. And tho' it must be own'd that she had, as all others have, many Imperfections, especially Anxieties for her Family, which sometimes interrupted her own Peace, and was otherwise inconvenient; yet by the Faith in her before describ'd, was she enabled to get above them, especially in the latter Part of her Days. By this

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Faith

A Funeral SERMON for

Faith deriving Support and Comfort from an All-sufficient Saviour, and whom, (as she told me in her last Sickness) she had found to be her Saviour, she devolv'd this Family-Burden upon him; nevertheless, for their Benefit, and the Honour of God, submitting, if he saw it good, to a yet longer Continuance in this Vale of Tears, tho' *to be with Christ* was to her *far better*. And thus in the Close of Life, when all Means were ineffectual, and Death, which reveals the Secrets of the Heart, appear'd in View, she beheld this last Enemy as the Messenger of God's righteous Displeasure against Sin, but without dismaying Terror and Amazement; being enabled to look beyond him to a living Redeemer, with Confidence and Joy. O happy Frame of Mind! and such as, thro' the Bowels of the Mercies of our God, persever'd with her thro' the Height of her Distemper unto the End. Having then, with great Assurance, declar'd her Belief of the Blessing of God upon her Family, with repeated Devotedness of them and her self to God in Covenant, she died, as the Saints of old, in that *Faith*, which is *the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen*; and, together with them, and all such, has no doubt enter'd into Peace.

Other Examples of holy Dying are view'd at a Distance, and by Faith; but here was

One

One lately before our Eyes, and in the Compass of our own Knowledge and Observation. And being according to the Rule of the Gospel, 'tis such a one, as I may therefore very justly, my Brethren, propose to your constant Memory and Imitation, with Hopes of a more immediate visible Effect thence for your Good. It has pleas'd God, of late, to remove many Persons from this Christian Society and Neighbourhood, who were truly eminent for their Fear, Faith, and Service in their Day. Such Removes have come very nigh my Heart; not on account of any temporal Loss to me, which, if that were the Case, were a very despicable Consideration to the faithful Ministers of Christ to mourn over; but on account of the awful Aspect which such Dispensations have upon us, and the Church of God in general. When God's Hand is thus lifted up, may it be observ'd! and when *the Righteous perish* from off our Earth, may *the Living, the Living* amongst us, *lay it to Heart!* so lay it to Heart, as to excite our Care and Diligence to live and die as they have done! This, 'tis probable, we shall be yet more concern'd to do, if we consider farther,

5. That this *Dying in Faith* is the surest Way to embalm, perpetuate, and preserve an honourable Remembrance of us after Death. And this, in the Estimate of God,

Ecclef. vii. and all wise Men, has ever been reputed a
 most desirable Blessing. By this *Faith*,
 Prov. xxii. maintain'd in them living and dying, the
 Heb. xi. 2. *Elders obtain'd a good Report*; the *Elders*, i.e.
 the Saints that liv'd in the first Ages of the
 World; all the Old Testament Saints, whe-
 ther of a longer or shorter Life, they are
 well thought and spoken of. The Ground
 of it is their Faith. As by *Faith* in their
 Day they were *Witnesses for God*, so God is
 now also a Witness for them: God, I say,
 whose Witness and Judgment being always
 according to Truth, may infallibly be de-
 pended on. Their Consciences also were
 their Witness. Whilst on Earth, they had
 this Testimony, that they pleased God. And
 all, even their Enemies, in their Heart at
 least, have since bore Witness to the Ho-
 nour of their renowned Faith, by observing
 its truly great and final Effects. But were
 they famous for nothing more? Yea cer-
 tainly, as the Scriptures shew, for various
 other Graces: *Abel* for Righteousness;
Enoch and *Noah* for Walking with God;
Abraham for ready Obedience to the Call
 and Command of God; *Moses* for Meekness
 and Prudence; *David*, *Samuel*, and the
 Prophets, for Courage and Fortitude in the
 Cause of God, and for a most fervent Spirit
 of Devotion: Why then is it their *Faith*
 only, which is here remark'd and com-
 mended? The Reason is this: It was
 Faith,

Faith, which was the Soul and Principle of all their other Excellencies and Atchievements; that Principle, whereby they receiv'd all the Influences of Heaven, and by which, as their Light and Strength, they were directed and quickned to all other Works and Duties. *This is the Victory that over-* ¹ *comes the World, even our Faith,* says the ⁴ *Apostle John*; and I add, upon the same Authority, that overcomes the Flesh, Sin, Satan, and everlasting Death.

6. Lastly, Another Motive to the Duty in the Text, is this; 'tis the highest, the noblest Act of Faith, its final compleating Act, thus to die: 'Tis the greatest Honour we can possibly do to God, the last and the noblest Testimony we can bear for him, his Grace, his Truth, and Ways, in this World; and, to add no more, 'tis the only Way to *inherit the Promises,* and to *have an abun-* ² *dant Entrance ministred to us into the ever-* ^{11.} *lasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* Thus dying, shall our Faith be perfected in Vision. And thus leaving the World, shall we meet again, and embrace all our pious Friends and Acquaintance, whose Removal we so deeply regret, and, together with them, all the Heirs of Salvation, whose Faces in the Flesh we never saw. This is an Argument of the greatest Urgency and Weight with upright, believing Minds. O God, grant it may be such

such to us! 'Tis the Argument, whereby I should have chosen more particularly to have recommended and impress'd on you, the surviving Consort and Children of the Deceas'd, the Duty in the Text; but my Time now permits it not.

It most nearly concerns you, Sirs, to observe, and be deeply affected with this solemn Stroke of Providence fallen upon you, that you may comport with the Ends thereof, which, I hope, are not unknown to you. You are yet in a World of Sin, Temptation and Infirmary: May God All-sufficient be a God to you, suitably to every Circumstance of your Case in active and suffering Life, in Time, and to Eternity! This is my *Heart's Desire, and Prayer to God for you*; the Sum of all you can desire yourselves, and others request of God for you. The Request is large and great, but you need not doubt its being granted, if you are but duly careful to *walk so as to please God*, by walking with him in the Power of that *Faith, which is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen.*

Heb. xi. 6. *Without such Faith, 'tis, in the Nature and Order of Things, impossible you should please him, and be intitled to his special Protection, Favour and Blessing. All your Hopes from Religion, without this Foundation, will be as vain as your Pretensions to it. Many are the Prayers of the Deceas'd*
on

on Record before God for you, which, from the Exuberance of his Compassions to Man's lapsed Nature, and for the Honour of his Truth and Covenant, he will, in all apt Ways, assuredly answer; for the Lord our God is a gracious and merciful God, and *his merciful Covenant is with his Servants, and their Seed, unto Thousands of Generations of them that love him, and keep his Commandments.* Upon the whole Matter then, to speak at once to all: If either Reason, or Revelation, if the Honour of God, or the just Sense of our Concernment with him, if our Comfort in Life, our Hope in Death, and our future everlasting State, which is nigh at hand, and by him to be determined; if these Considerations, I say, be of any Weight in themselves, and can have any real Influence over us, I intreat they may now prevail upon us all, seriously and constantly to endeavour thus to *die in Faith.*

And thus much on the *second* general Head I propos'd to speak to. I close with a few Directions in order to thus *dying in Faith*; and to this Purpose every one will see that these following Advices are necessary. As,

I. See that you now distinctly understand the true Nature of this Faith, *What it is.* As the Faith of Christians, on account of a fuller

fuller and clearer Revelation from God than was afforded to the Fathers before Christ, must be of larger Extent; so should it be of greater Firmness in the Habit, of greater Freedom and Vigor in its Exercises; as the clearer the Light, the more accurate and distinct the Vision. That this should be so, no Man can in the least doubt.

2. See also, that by sound Conversion, and unfeigned Consent of Heart to God's gracious Covenant in the Gospel, you be in a State of Faith. That you have within you an habitual, permanent Perswasion of the great Truths of God and the World to come, of all that he has reveal'd and requir'd you to believe. That your Faith be in you, not a transient, superficial Opinion or Conceit, but a Divine Habit of the Operation of God.

3. Live in the daily Exercise of Faith. Being fully perswaded of the Certainty, Reality, and vast Importance of future, invisible Things, let your Thoughts, Designs, Affections, and Actions, be constantly overrul'd thereby. *Know, O vain Man, that Faith without Works is dead: By Works Faith is made perfect.* By a steady Course of sincere good Actions, Faith, as all other Habits, is improv'd, strengthen'd, and attains its proper Ends. Let your whole Lives then be transacted in Faith. Through Faith learn more and more every Day, to
trample

James ii.
20, 22.

trample this World under your Feet; to hate Sin and cast it out; to refine and spiritualize your Natures; to derive every Day yet more and more of the Divine Grace into your Hearts; to resemble him in all his moral Excellencies, and to *grow up in all Things into Christ our Head.* But besides this, Eph. iv. 15.

4. By a realizing Faith, and frequent serious Meditation, be often putting your selves into the Posture of dying Persons; and to your Uttermost be exercising those Acts of Faith on God and the Redeemer, on the invisible World, and all the Promises of the Gospel, which you apprehend may be the more peculiar Work and Business of that awful Period. This is *dying daily.* No Day should pass without some such Exercises 1 Cor. xv. 31. and Endeavours, because you have no Day of certain Exemption from Mortality and the Grave. 'Tis a great Opportunity you have for this Work by Night upon your Beds, when God holds your Eyes waking that you cannot sleep; and when Death likewise comes into your Neighbourhood and Families.

Often and deeply consider, what *may* be the Trials of your Faith at such a Time. How many, how awful, and how difficult! Such as will undoubtedly call for the most vigorous, establish'd Faith. And write upon the fleshly Tables of your Heart, as

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with

Rev. iii. 21. *with a Pen of Iron, and the Point of a Diamond, this solemn Truth, namely, That no Faith, no Victory; and if no Victory, no Triumph. To him only that overcomes, says Christ, will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne. And what Way have Christians to overcome, but by Faith? To conclude all,*

5. As ever you hope to succeed in your Endeavours to *die in Faith*, I do most earnestly exhort and recommend it to you also, That you would be much in fervent Prayer to God for those Aids, Presence and Succours from Time to Time, which alone can carry you comfortably to, and through that final, inevitable Conflict. Vain, alas! are all your Efforts, farther than they are enliven'd and seconded by his own Spirit and Grace. Oh, *Pray always* therefore, *with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit. Pray without ceasing. Pray and faint not.* While you thus pray, you do prevail, as *Israel* did over *Amalek*, while *Moses* held up his Hands in the Mount. It cannot be, that God, who enjoins and hears Prayer, will suffer you to pray in vain. Oh! No; *Your most abundant faithful Labour, shall not be in vain in the Lord.* Faith in the Words of the infallible God expressly tells you so.

Eph. vi.
18.

1 Theff.

v. 17.

Luke

xviii. 1.

Exod. xvii.

1 Cor. xv.

58.

F I N I S.